

# DODDINGTON POOL

## BIRD REPORT 2016



Common Tern by Dennis Swaby



Sandwich Tern



Black Tern

## DODDINGTON POOL BIRD REPORT FOR 2016

Details of all the water related birds and birds of prey that we have recorded have been included, together with most of the more noteworthy species.

### **Mute Swan** (*Cygnus olor*)

| Maximum    | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Doddington | 29  | 14  | 4   | 0   | 2   | 29  | 36  | 48  | 31  | 11  | 24  | 16  |

The resident pair nested, hatched six young and five fledged.

### **Black Swan** (*Cygnus atratus*)

One was seen with Mute Swans on 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Pink-footed Goose** (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

80 flew over heading south east on 12<sup>th</sup> October and three over on 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

### **Greylag Goose** (*Anser anser*)

Recorded in every month with high numbers in winter, maximum of 240 in January and 260 in October. One pair bred and fledged six young.

### **Canada Goose** (*Branta canadensis*)

As last year there was the usual numbers of under 200 in the early part of the year but in autumn numbers increased dramatically. The peak count in September was 510 and in November peaked at 520. Breeding success was higher than last year and in July a creche of 70 young of differing ages was recorded.

### **Barnacle Goose** (*Branta leucopsis*)

One was seen on 24<sup>th</sup> March and two on 14<sup>th</sup> April; both presumably escapes from a collection.

### **Bar-headed Goose** (*Anser indicus*)

One, escaped from a collection, became attached to a Canada Goose flock and was seen regularly with them from August to the year end.

### **Shelduck** (*Tadorna tadorna*)

A pair was present during February and March and were joined by three others in April and it was hoped that they may stay to breed but they all moved off before June.

### **Wigeon** (*Anas penelope*)

In the first winter period just three in January and four in April. 24 in September and then varying numbers in the second winter period with one in October, 61 in November and 28 in December.

### **Gadwall** (*Anas strepera*)

Not recorded every year so three in March and four in December were welcome records.

### **Teal** (*Anas crecca*)

A winter visitor with a maximum of 17 in March and 18 in December.

### **Mallard** (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

A very common resident, with over 500 counted on the two pools in autumn and many young seen.

### **Pintail** (*Anas acuta*)

Quite scarce here so one on 27<sup>th</sup> December was a good record.

### **Shoveler** (*Anas clypeata*)

Present from January to April with a maximum of 21 and from October to the year end with a maximum count of just seven, following the usual pattern of recent years.

**Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)**

Numbers remain low for this once common species, although slightly better than last year. Present from January to April with a maximum of 31 in February. In the second winter period present from October to December with a maximum count of 13 in December.

**Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)**

| Maximum    | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Doddington | 120 | 96  | 137 | 133 | 19  | 51  | 70  | 54  | 52  | 67  | 36  | 47  |

A good year with higher numbers in winter and excellent breeding success. At least three broods totalling 26 young on the main pool and four broods totalling 27 young on the Lemon Pool. Also on the Lemon Pool on 7<sup>th</sup> July a group of 11 newly hatched young were seen but with no parents; 10 were still present on 15<sup>th</sup> but none on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Scaup (*Aythya marila*)**

A male was recorded on 10<sup>th</sup> February, a scarce species here.

**Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)**

A regular winter visitor and present from January to 4<sup>th</sup> April, with a good maximum count of 31 in February and from October to December with a maximum of 18 in December.

**Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)**

Uncommon away from the coast so a male on 18<sup>th</sup> March was a good record.

**Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)**

Just two records with a pair seen in February and a female in November.

**Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)**

Regularly seen in the area.

**Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*)**

None actually recorded.

**Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)**

Many reared by the shooting syndicate and released.

**Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)**

Recorded in all months except May. Usually less than ten, except for the regular autumn surge in numbers, with a high count of 64 in October and 45 in November but down to five in December.

**Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)**

Only recorded in the second winter period with one in October, two in November and one in December.

**Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)**

The breeding colony has again continued to grow with seven nests this year, and on 17<sup>th</sup> June ten fledged young were seen standing on or under the nests. Details were included in the BTO national heronry survey. Present all year with a maximum count of 12 in November.

**Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)**

An average year when in August on Lemon Pool six adults with two broods of one and two and on Main Pool four adults with two broods of two and three were recorded. The maximum count was 17 in November.

**Great Crested Grebe** (*Podiceps cristatus*)

A good breeding season and in July on Main Pool 34 adults and at least five broods with 11 young were recorded. On Lemon Pool one pair had four young and one pair failed. The usual post-breeding flock was an average 59 in September.

**Red Kite** (*Milvus milvus*)

On 1<sup>st</sup> April one slowly passed over, circling and heading north west.

**Sparrowhawk** (*Accipiter nisus*)

Resident and breeds in the area.

**Buzzard** (*Buteo buteo*)

Resident and common with four pairs seen soaring in view at the same time in March.

**Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*)

On 7<sup>th</sup> April one flew in at 10-30 had a look round for five minutes then continued north.

**Kestrel** (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Resident and two seen regularly near the sailing club and two young seen there in autumn.

**Hobby** (*Falco subbuteo*)

Two records this year, with one on 28<sup>th</sup> April and one on 21<sup>st</sup> July.

**Peregrine Falcon** (*Falco peregrinus*)

Seen more often in recent times and wandering singles were seen in February, April, August and October.

**Water Rail** (*Rallus aquatica*)

One was seen on the island on Main Pool on 16<sup>th</sup> November.

**Moorhen** (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Bred on both pools and at least four young seen on each. Maximum count was 14 on Main Pool and six on Lemon Pool in August.

**Coot** (*Fulica atra*)

In the first winter period the maximum count was 223 in February. Many pairs bred and in July a count of 395 was estimated to be 267 adults and 128 young. In the second winter period the maximum count was down to 178 in October.

**Avocet** (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)

On 10<sup>th</sup> March one was watched for two hours; first resting by the island and then feeding in the shallow water there. It was not present the next day.

**Oystercatcher** (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

The first bird returned on 25<sup>th</sup> January, even earlier than last year (30<sup>th</sup> January). Two pairs were known to have bred, one with a nest on Main Pool island and the other on the flat roof of the yacht club as usual. Both pairs were seen to have two small young and probably the island pair fledged two young. Another pair was reported from elsewhere on the estate during April and May.

**Lapwing** (*Vanellus vanellus*)

The usual winter flock seen regularly over nearby fields with maximum counts of 131 in February and 170 in December. But on 31<sup>st</sup> December a huge flock of around 750 appeared and circled over for 30 minutes and then flew back off north where they came from.

**Jack Snipe** (*Lymnocyptes minimus*)

On 19<sup>th</sup> February two were seen. Then one was seen occasionally in November and December. Probably present continuously, along with the continued presence of Common Snipe, but it proved very elusive to see as Jack Snipe usually are! Good records.

**Snipe** (*Gallinago gallinago*)

In spring a single on 14<sup>th</sup> April. Then in autumn an unprecedented series of records starting with four on 25<sup>th</sup> August and then present continuously through to the year end with a maximum count of 11 on 11<sup>th</sup> November. Usually seen on the waterline around the island.

**Black-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa limosa*)

On 24<sup>th</sup> June a group of ten flew in, looked round and then flew off.

**Dunlin** (*Calidris alpina*)

An unusual record of one on 6<sup>th</sup> October.

**Common Sandpiper** (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

The commonest wader and a regular visitor on passage although fewer records than usual. Singles from 18<sup>th</sup> April to 11<sup>th</sup> May then in autumn just two on 12<sup>th</sup> July and one on 12<sup>th</sup> August.

**Green Sandpiper** (*Tringa ochropus*)

Two on 4<sup>th</sup> August and one on 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

**Black Tern** (*Chlidonias niger*)

On 10<sup>th</sup> May five were watched feeding over Main Pool from 19-30 to 20-00.

**Sandwich Tern** (*Sterna sandvicensis*)

Not common inland so six passing through on 12<sup>th</sup> July was an excellent record.

**Common Tern** (*Sterna hirundo*)

Two records on spring passage with one on 11<sup>th</sup> April and two on 11<sup>th</sup> May. Then an excellent series of records on return passage from 4<sup>th</sup> July to 5<sup>th</sup> September with a maximum count of four on 19<sup>th</sup> July.

**Black-headed Gull** (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)

A maximum count of around 6000 in the gull roost in December.

**Common Gull** (*Larus canus*)

A maximum count of around 50 in the gull roost in December.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*)

A maximum count of around 1,500 in the gull roost in December.

**Herring Gull** (*Larus argentatus*)

At least 100 seen in the gull roost in December. Very scarce here ten years ago but numbers are slowly increasing, probably due to recently established breeding colonies in Crewe.

**Stock Dove** (*Columba oenas*)

Seen regularly but no high counts recorded.

**Wood Pigeon** (*Columba palumbus*)

Very common but the largest flock size noted was just 600 in February.

**Barn Owl** (*Tyto alba*)

Does breed and adults occasionally seen at dusk from the main road.

**Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)**

Two fledged juveniles took up residence in a willow tree during August - nice to see.

**Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)**

Resident and breeds. Heard occasionally in early spring.

**Common Swift (*Apus apus*)**

The highest count noted was 120 in July.

**Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)**

Two seen in January and then none until July. One or two seen regularly from then until the year end. In July one was seen carrying a fish as it flew across the main road so presumably bred there.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)**

The commonest woodpecker and several pairs bred.

**Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)**

Very common and many pairs breed in and around the hall.

**Raven (*Corvus corax*)**

The resident pair were recorded in most months and seen guarding the usual nest site in Georges Wood, although no family group was seen.

**Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)**

Resident and breeds.

**Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)**

Usually less than 10 birds present.

**Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)**

A good count of 350 on 29<sup>th</sup> April, low over the water in a bitterly cold strong wind.

**Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)**

The only flock size noted was 20 on 29<sup>th</sup> April. Several pairs nested in the old timber yard shed.

**House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*)**

The highest count noted was 40 on 29<sup>th</sup> April.

**Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)**

A summer visitor.

**Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)**

Not common here but one singing on 14<sup>th</sup> April.

**Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)**

A summer visitor.

**Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)**

A summer visitor.

**Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)**

A summer visitor.

**Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)**

At least five singing males around Lemon Pool.

**Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Small numbers during the winter periods.

**Fieldfare** (*Turdus pilaris*)

The only large flock recorded was 150 on 28<sup>th</sup> January.

**Redwing** (*Turdus iliacus*)

The highest count was 70 on 28<sup>th</sup> January.

**Spotted Flycatcher** (*Muscicapa striata*)

No records this year.

**Stonechat** (*Saxicola torquata*)

A striking looking male was good to see on 27<sup>th</sup> March.

**Wheatear** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

A good fortnight in spring for this passage bird. Present in varying numbers from 5<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> April with a maximum of eight on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Yellow Wagtail** (*Motacilla flava*)

The first record was one on 1<sup>st</sup> April, then seven on 5<sup>th</sup> April. Once again a good year with males holding territory along the road to the units and later seen carrying food and dropping into the cereal crop in July, although only one juvenile was seen. Last record was 12<sup>th</sup> September.

**Grey Wagtail** (*Motacilla cinerea*)

One or two were seen occasionally from October to the year end.

**Pied Wagtail** (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*)

An exceptional spring passage for both Pied and White Wagtail (*m.a.alba*). Pied had 11 on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 55 on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 10 on 8<sup>th</sup> April and two on the 18<sup>th</sup>. In the same period White had 1 on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 4 on 24<sup>th</sup> March and a high of 21 on 18<sup>th</sup> April, with both species present on most days between those dates. Only recorded on 12<sup>th</sup> September on autumn passage with 16 Pied and 2 White. One pair bred and four young seen.

**Meadow Pipit** (*Anthus pratensis*)

A passage migrant and winter visitor, maximum of 16 in April and 30 in October.

**Chaffinch** (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Once again no large flocks were seen.

**Greenfinch** (*Chloris chloris*)

Present but no actual sightings recorded.

**Goldfinch** (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Present but no large flocks recorded.

**Linnet** (*Carduelis cannabina*)

Not recorded every year nowadays so a flock of 120 on 24<sup>th</sup> October was a good record.

**Reed Bunting** (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

A few pairs breed, with two singing males around the yacht club and south bay in April, May and June and one on Lemon Pool. A few also remain for the winter.

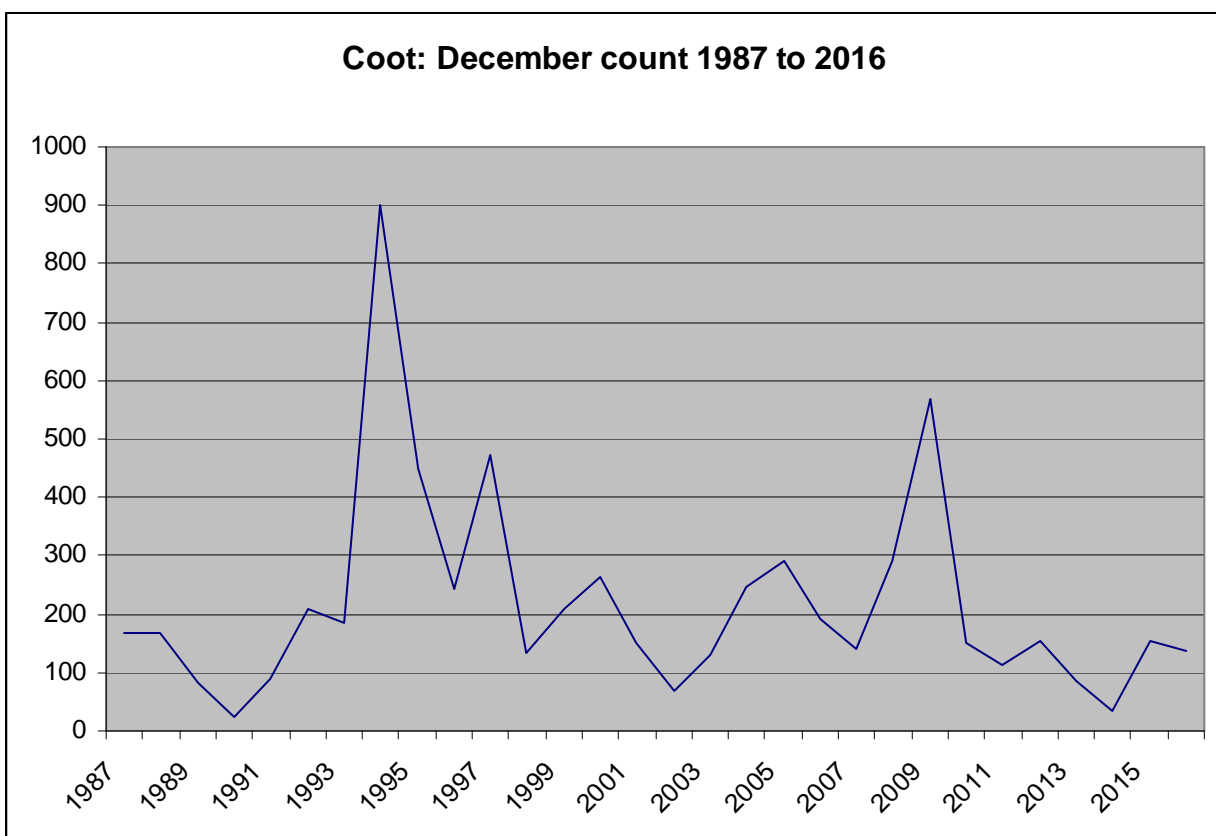
Colin Lythgoe; SECOS Recorder; and Andy & Mike Warner

## Coot

The UK breeding population is augmented in winter with visitors from northern Europe. The total national population has increased by around a third in the past 20 years.

The Cheshire and Wirral Bird Atlas of 2004 to 2007 cites Doddington Pool as the major site for Coot in Cheshire and Wirral with 884 birds counted in November 2004, a huge count but well short of the record count of 1,300 birds in November 2001. The next largest flock during the survey period for the atlas was 400 on Redes Mere with few other sites approaching 200.

I have used data on the British Trust for Ornithology database, where I have submitted counts since 1987 to the Wetland Bird Survey, to produce a chart of December maxima from 1987 to 2016.



### *December counts from 1987 to 2016*

The 2014 late winter counts were very low, just 35 in December. However, they have shown some recovery as the chart shows, although still lower than the mean figure.

Colin Lythgoe